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ABSTRACT

After a brief description of third force coalitions and their goals, this research attempts to determine what areas of consensus unite such groups and what issues or opinions can potentially divide them. A Q factor analysis is employed to establish a methodology for identifying language that has appeal to various opinion groups. Respondents in this study were drawn from three groups: (1) the third force coalition in Youngstown; (2) teachers and administrators in the Youngstown schools; and (3) people not connected with the schools who, based on their ethnic and socioeconomic status, were assumed to be less favorable to school desegregation. Various statements that reflect a broad array of opinions were gathered over two years and then categorized under different perspectives. These categories were then factor analyzed to locate clusters of respondents with similar opinions. Findings indicate that there is significant agreement on enough points to suggest that a basis exists for coalitions. The three factors or opinion types identified may even be regarded as significant variants of a single viewpoint. On the other hand, there are important and potentially divisive differences among the three groups, especially at the more specific levels of "policy." (Author/EB)

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"THIRD FORCE" COALITIONS and SCHOOL DESEGREGATION:

An Exploratory Application of Q Factor Analysis

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> Testimony ... revealed that school desegregation in Boston was seriously hampered by virtually a total lack of public and private leadership. The city's elected officials refused to express support for the court order or the goal of school desegregation . . . . The absence of leadership involved all sectors of the city. Business leaders were generally passive . . . . Relatively few of the clergy provided strong moral leadership. Many social and community service agencies also adopted neutral positions. . . .[1]

Determined not to repeat the experience of Boston, U.S. cities facing mandated school desegregation have, since 1974, generally found ways to organize advance support from many sources for peaceful, lawful behavior. One of these ways is the "third force" coalition.

A number of successful models now exist for the creation of third force coalitions, not aligned with either side in the desegregation litigation. Examples include the Council for Peace and Equality in Education (Los Angeles); Pro-Detroit and its successor, the Coalition for Peaceful Integration; the Coalition for Peaceful Schools (Milwaukee); SANE of Delaware (Wilmington); the Columbus Metropolitan School Committee; the Greater Cleveland Project; and Educational Opportunity Youngstown. Initial impetus for such organizations typically comes from religious, business, or labor leaders, who can agree that any violence may do great harm to the community. Around this core is built a coalition of those individuals or groups willing to subordinate any preference on the main issue to support for goals such as: "(1) to encourage a positive, peaceful, and constructive response to the court's decision, whatever it may be; and (2) to promote new programs intended to continue to improve the quality of education for all students in the . . . public schools."[2]

Third force coalitions engage in a wide variety of activity, including: (1) seeking public endorsements of their goals by all segments of the community, especially leadership; (2) spreading accurate information about the issues,

nature of the legal process, and options open to the community; (3) pressing responsible officials to involve all elements of the community in planning for desegregation; (4) injecting new school program and structural innovation concepts into the planning process; (5) urging people to keep cool and act positively; (6) organizing get acquainted sessions for children and parents of newly desegregated schools; (7) providing training in conflict management or human relations; and (8) assisting and monitoring the desegregation process for the court.

The success of such groups in achieving their goals depends in part on the range of opinion groups and opinion leaders which they can encompass. For instance, people who support neighborhood schools may resist association with a group they perceive as pro-busing; but these same people may be more willing to support an umbrella type organization that is concerned with another value - avoiding rancorous conflict. However, the more inclusive the group, the smaller the number of positions or actions on which its membership can reach consensus. So, there is tension between the goals of: (1) broadening the coalition; and (2) maintaining a consensus on what to do.[3]

This research originates in a desire to understand the nature of the third force coalitions and to help solve the practical problems of how to hold them together and keep them effective. To do this, we must know what areas of consensus unite such groups and what issues or opinions can potentially divide them.

Method

A methodology is needed to identify language that has appeal for various opinion groups, either because they read different meanings into it or because they have genuine areas of agreement; to make fine distinctions between similar

positions; and to avoid stereotyping people into polar categories, as so often happens in standard scalar research. Such language can then become a tool with which to forge a broader community coalition of support for the schools.[4]

To achieve this methodological goal, we have employed Q factor analysis.[5] The respondents in this investigation were not a random or a representative sample of the community as in more familiar research techniques. Instead, these respondents were surrogates for known interests in the event under study.[6] Our population of respondents (n = 34) was drawn from three groups: (1) the third force coalition in Youngstown (n = 10); teachers and administrators in the Youngstown schools (n = 14);[7] and others not connected with the schools - people who, based on their ethnic and socioeconomic status, were assumed to be less favorable to school desegregation (n = 10).

Youngstown's debates over desegregation seem to reflect hopes and fears common to most communities faced with this circumstance. Over the past two years, we have followed this debate, as well as the national dialogues, and have extracted various statements that reflect a broad array of opinions.[8]

Our Q sample of 60 statements was an attempt to reflect the essence of the Youngstown debates over desegregation. These statements were created and categorized according to the plan outlined in Table I. The main effects of that table (d.-h.) are five perspectives selected from various possibilities for their apparent saliency to the debate and their organizing power. They are briefly defined as follows:

d. compensatory treatment. Victims of discrimination deserve special treatment. The price of injustice has to be paid somewhere, sometime.[9]

e. good citizen. We must support the authorities and uphold the law. Those who refuse to do so are immature or ignorant.[10]

f. peacemaking. Inherent in the most difficult situations are opportunities. A way must be found to answer the valid arguments of both sides of a question and to avoid violence and destructive acts.[11]

g. symbolic racism. Blacks and their allies are violating cherished values and making illegitimate demands for changes in the status quo.[12]

h. anti-reform. Some people are always trying to use the government to change society at other people's expense and usually fouling up the works.[13]

TABLE 1

A Structure for Opinions on School Desegregation

Main Effects	Levels		
	a. bias	b. wish	c. policy
d. compensatory treatment	(ad)	(bd)	(cd)
e. "good citizenship"	(ae)	(be)	(ce)
f. peacemaking	(af)	(bf)	(cf)
g. symbolic racism	(ag)	(bg)	(cg)
h. anti-reform	(ah)	(bh)	(ch)

N = (4 x 15) = 60 statements

Example: (ad) Without busing or some other means to integrate education, black students will not be able to catch up very well with white students.

The "bias", "wish", and "policy" levels of Table I (a.-c.) concern the "degree to which an opinion reflects definiteness with regard to political action and the extent to which it is the result of a thought-out theoretical position."[14] This structure helps to assure representative coverage of the attitude domain to be explored.

The statements, each printed on a separate card, were sorted on an 11 point scale, from +5, "most agree," to -5, "most disagree," using a forced distribution that limited the number of statements placed at each increment of the scale to five or six.[15]

The 34 completed sorts were then factor analyzed to locate clusters of respondents with similar opinions.[16] Each cluster may be interpreted as the reflection of some underlying attitudinal set characterizing, to varying degrees, all members of that group.[17] An ordering of statements typical of the group was produced, which is a weighted average of the orderings produced by members of the cluster.

Findings

Among those surveyed, there is significant agreement on enough points to suggest that a basis exists for coalition. The three factors or opinion types identified may even be regarded as significant variants of a single viewpoint. On the other hand, there are important and potentially divisive differences among the three groups, especially at the more specific levels of "policy."

Areas of agreement. All three groups strongly endorse these "wish" statements:

> 53. I hope that when this is all over, everyone can say: "our community is a place where people have learned how to live together" (+5, +5, +5):*
>
> 11. I want to see our community join hands in a unified effort to protect the children and improve our schools (+5, +5, +4);
>
> 49. The world would be a better place if groups like the blacks weren't always pushing for more than their share (-4, -5, -5);

All three groups share the "bias":

> 13. I don't believe you can decide what is best for a child by looking at his color (+4, +5, +5).

---

*Numbers in parentheses show approximate responses given by the three factors.

Only two "policy" statements attracted somewhat similar responses from the three groups. These are:

26. The desegregation plan adopted by the court should give parents and children of both races more educational choices (+5, +2, +5);

37. Federal judges should not be allowed to stick their noses in local concerns like public education (-5, -3, -4).

Factor One (12 people): This largest group of respondents dreams of a society where blacks and whites have equal access to good education and jobs, shares the common wish that the community can join together in support of children and schools, and believes in a desegregation plan that expands choices for both races. They "would like to see more whites understand how far back blacks have been pushed behind the rest of us," and believe that "school desegregation is necessary to insure that everyone receives equal treatment under law." Accordingly, they reject the views that "blacks are now getting better jobs and more help than they deserve" and that "the neighborhood school is one institution that should be preserved at any cost!" In short, this group has few if any reservations about the desegregation process; sees it as possibly "the last, best opportunity our city has to focus everyone's attention on improving our schools."

Factor Two (8 people): The widest disagreements between factors one and two are over whether "the courts should be prepared to take over and run the schools if necessary to insure that the law is obeyed" (factor one agrees, factor two disagrees strongly); whether desegregation is necessary to insure equality under law (strongly agree, stongly disagree); whether "we must desegregate our schools immediately"(agree, strongly disagree) and whether "forced busing is social engineering at its most reckless and irresponsible" (strongly disagree, agree). Despite these differences, the rank-order correlation between statement orderings produced by the two groups is +.38. They share, for

instance, strong agreement that "you can't decide what is best for a child by looking at his color." Factor two is, therefore, a potential ally of factor one on many issues.

Factor Three (3 people): This perspective, more than the other two, sets highest priority upon specific interests at stake in enforced desegregation, especially the education of the students and the views of local citizenry. As with the other two factors, that sense of priority is set down in a background of generalized good will toward all groups and a longing for "community." Factor three is concerned that students should not be bused from a good area to a bad school, that government should show whites the same respect as blacks, that the desegregation plan should provide more educational choices, that the courts should know how the local people view busing, and that we should join hands to protect kids and improve our schools. This brief sketch may appear as a smokescreen to disguise a latent opposition to busing. But an examination of the statements that this factor disagrees with does not tend to support that possibility. Factor three disagrees most strongly with these opinions in this order of disagreement: that "busing is unnecessary government interference in our lives," that "the world would be a better place if groups like blacks weren't always pushing for more than their share," and that "the leaders of our community know what is best for us now and deserve our total cooperation." That latter "disagreement" ties neatly to the list of "agreements" above, in that local leaders might not take into consideration the interests that this factor deems crucial. Hence, those leaders would not deserve their "total cooperation."

Disagreements among the three factor groups seem to be capable of peaceful, if not perfect, resolution. Moreover, the numerous areas of close agreement anong all three factors provide ample grounds for coalition. Also

noteable is the nonappearance of extreme and stereotypic "types" that form the basis for media "dramatizations" of court-ordered desegregation. That nonappearance is, perhaps, the most striking and controversial aspect of our preliminary investigation of the Youngstown situation.

Conclusion

In this exploration, what we did not find may be more important than what we did. Our Q sample of statements provided respondents with opportunity to adopt the polarized positions on busing and school issues so prominent in standard analysis. Yet, many emotionally loaded statements were placed in the distribution near the center area of "neutrality" or "ambivalence."

The sorters were people for whom the issues were salient and they appeared to be "ego involved" in the sorting process. Moreover, the research technique and the mechanics of our approach gave respondents assurance of anonymity. We must assume, therefore, that the results provide some realistic indications of the potential political behavior of the three groups.

If Q methodology can be used predictively, then it may have a number of practical applications:[18] (1) As a quick inexpensive way to take the temperature of a community, to test its climate of opinion, and to document the possibility of a third force organization; (2) as a basis for agenda-setting, especially the projection of shape and contour for such a coalition; (3) based upon agreements among Q factors, construction of a policy statement to take in the largest possible coalition that still has some chance for survival as a single entity;[19] (4) use of such a policy statement as a campaign resource, e.g., to design literature that reinforces the organizational image as inclusive, rather than exclusive; (5) identifying potentially divisive issues to be avoided, defused somehow, or faced more directly if need be, but with awareness and

sensitivity; (6) sensitizing coalition leaders to that which is painfully obvious but equally dangerous when overlooked, i.e., to keep their "logical" view of the situation from preventing recognition and appreciation of other "logical" interpretations of that situation; (7) conversion of Q statements that distinguish among the factors to survey research questionnaire items, if it becomes important to discover proportions of a known population holding the patterns of belief uncovered through Q.

The rich insights gained from Q methodology are especially valuable for exploration of complex issues such as school desegregation. We believe that additional work will make this a practical tool for guiding leaders toward actions that transcend stereotypes and increase chances for peaceful conflict management.

End Notes

[1]Fulfilling the Letter and Spirit of the Law, Desegregation of the Nation's Public Schools, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, August, 1976, pp. 18-19.

[2]Educational Opportunity Youngstown Newsletter, Vol. 1, #1 (Jan. 1977).

[3]The model here approximates the typical U.S. major political party. See: Ira Sharkansky, The Routines of Politics (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1970), 39-42 for an explanation of the phenomenon of housing a multiplicity of beliefs within each major party.

[4]Murray Edelman, Politics as Symbolic Action (Chicago : Markham, 1971), 65-83, views language as a dynamic influence upon social relationships. Indeed, he explains political events as "largely creations of the language used to describe them."

[5]William Stephenson, The Study of Behavior (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1953).

[6]William Stephenson, The Play Theory of Mass Communication (Chicago: U..of Chicago Press, 1967), 20-21.

[7]William D. Hawley and Ray C. Risk, "On the Future Implementation of School Desegregation: Some Considerations," in The Courts, Social Science, and School Desegregation, edited by Betsy Levin and Willis D. Hawley (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1977), 422. These authors conclude: "There is every reason to believe that a crucial variable affecting the impact of desegregation on race relations is the role played by teachers and administrators."

[8]We are especially indebted to a paper by Gary J. Hennessey, "A Model of the Public's Perception of Busing, 1954 to the Present," delivered at the Urban Education Conference, Norfolk, VA., Nov. 22, 1977 for a content analysis of articles and documents that make up a large part of the national discourse on mandated desegregation.

[9]An analog to this perspective is the definition of "equal opportunity" in affirmative action programs in terms of results. Thus, in order to get "better" results for groups previously discriminated against, it may be necessary to design special treatment for such groups when they are in competition with traditionally more favored groups for values in our society.

[10]This may appear to be a stereotype of the civically competent individual posited in Gabriel L. Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture (Boston: Little, Brown, 1965), 117-121. This version, however, is empirically grounded in research of Youngstown's school levy elections as reported by Sylvan H. Cohen and Richard W. Taylor, "An Experimental Study of the Public Mind," Experimental Study of Politics, (July 1971), 82-117.

[11]This may be an important strand of the logic, perhaps even an imperative of collective action in a democracy. Certainly it is reflected in the compromise nature of most legislation. One phenomenon related to such a viewpoint is Theodore Lowi's "interest group liberalism," the use of governmental authority to keep the peace by providing a little something for everyone. See T.J. Lowi, The End of Liberalism (N.Y.: Norton, 1969).

[12]John B. McConahay and Willis D. Hawley, "Is it the Buses or the Blacks?" paper presented at the American Psychological Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco (Aug. 28, 1977), p. 3. This version of racism is contrasted with old fashioned racism that opposed almost any form of integration and desegregation and openly subscribed to negative stereotypes of blacks.

[13]Robert E. Lane, Political Thinking and Consciousness (Chicago: Markham, 1969), especially 145-171 on the politics of aggression of the right marked by many hostile references.

[14]James G. Coke and Steven R. Brown, "Public Attitudes About Land Use Policy and Their Impact on State Policy-Makers," Publius 6,1 (Winter 1976), 99-100; G.C. Thompson, "The Evaluation of Public Opinion," in Reader in Public Opinion and Communication. 2nd ed., 7-12, edited by B. Berelson and M. Janowitz (New York: Free Press, 1966).

[15]The Q-sort distribution is as follows:

(most disagree)							(most agree)			
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	5

where the numbers above the line comprise the range of feeling and the numbers below the line the number of statements placed at each scale increment.

[16] The principal components method was used to factor the 34x34 correlation matrix, with a minimum eigenvalue of 1.8 as the standard for retention of factors prior to rotation. With 60 statements in the Q sort, using the standard error of the coefficient of correlation, a loading of $\pm$ .35 was significant at the .01 confidence level to determine which respondents were located in which cluster. Respondents significantly loaded on more than one factor were not considered defining for producing the weighted average ordering of statements typifying a factor.

[17]Fred N. Kerlinger, "Q Methodology and the Testing of Theory," New York University, 1958 (mimeo).

[18]Howard D. Hamilton and Sylvan H. Cohen, Policy Making by Plebiscite: School Referenda (Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1974), 239-241.

[19]John F. Cragan and Donald C. Shields, "Foreign Policy Communication Dramas: How Mediated Rhetoric Played in Peoria in Campaign '76," Quarterly Journal of Speech 63 (Oct. 1977) 274-280, in which the researchers used statements from Q factors as a means of writing pretested, dramatistic speeches.